

Minutes of Public Forum Concerning Proposed Design Concepts For Flower Street
Pedestrian and Bike Bridge Over the Amtrak and CTFAstrak Routes in Hartford

July 16, 2013, 7pm – 9pm
The Lyceum, 227 Lawrence Street, Hartford, CT

DOT Officials Present: James Redeker, Commissioner
Thomas Harley, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Engineering &
Construction
Michael Sanders, Transit Administrator, Bureau of Public
Transportation
Randal Davis, Special Assistant to Commissioner Redeker
David Head, Transportation Supervising Planner

DOT Consultants Present: Tony Morelli, Baker Engineering Corp.
Tomas Strand, Baker Engineering Corp.

City of Hartford Officials Present: Tom Deller, Director of Development Services

Commissioner Redeker and Mr. Harley welcomed those in attendance.

DOT Presentation:

Mr. Morelli, Baker engineering along with Mr. Harley provided a 15-minute presentation about initial bridge design concepts from earlier in 2013. They discussed challenges and limitations to building in that area. Technical requirements such as grade limitations were also noted. The speaker also stated that these designs were mainly for the purpose of determining whether it was possible to fit a bridge in that space.

City of Hartford Presentation:

Tom Deller, Director of Development Services, City of Hartford provided a 15 minute overview of improvements to the Broad St., Capital Avenue, Farmington Avenue and Sigourney St. area that the City would be undertaking as part of its grant award. These items tie into some of the work being performed by the DOT in the same area.

Moderator:

Mr. Harley reviewed the purpose of the meeting:

- a. For the DOT to get feedback for the design of the Up-and-Over.

- b. Mr. Harley stressed that the original design concepts were performed in order to understand the design limitations, at a time when the Department was forced to consider a 2-1-2 bus lane option.
- c. Because those initial designs clarified challenges and limitations, they will save time now during the current expedited design process.
- d. The DOT will take all of the stakeholder views from the meeting into consideration as the concepts are developed.
- e. Mr. Harley expressed that he hoped to have possible design options in about three months. Mr. Harley also expressed that as soon as some preliminary designs were produced that the Department would share them with the NRZ's for feedback. He hoped that the initial concept designs might be ready in a month or so. (Late August-September).
- f. Mr. Harley took questions from the audience.

Public Comments & Questions:

1. What are the ADA requirements for this type of "Up and Over" (UO)?
2. Can the crossing be designed at grade instead of using an UO?
3. If CTfastrak were 1 lane wide would this allow for an area of refuge for pedestrians/cyclists so that the crossing could be at grade?
4. Does not want the UO just wants the crossing to stay open for bike/ped.
5. Can the "ramp" be started at Capitol and run to the UO instead of using switchbacks?
6. The UO is not needed due to alternate routes in the area, Broad Street; it is a waste of money.
7. If the UO is built it needs to be aesthetically pleasing and a signature facility or it will degrade the area and will not get used. If this is designed and constructed as a signature facility then it will be an attractant for bikes/peds and a facility that will get use.
8. Can the guideway and rail lines be lowered to decrease the height needed for the UO, this would reduce the number of switchbacks needed for the UO?
9. Why are elevators not being looked at instead of the UO?
10. Just get something done and don't spend forever thinking about it!
11. Feel like we are just rehashing conversations we have already had with little or no progress
12. Bring in bike/ped experts to conceptualize what a nice looking and functional UO would be.
13. What is the timeframe for when design plans can be produced and shown to the public?
14. Temporarily terminate the guideway at Sigourney Street and let the busses use the local road network to get into the CBD. Do this until the whole I-84 viaduct project determines the best course of action for the viaduct.
15. Make the UO aesthetically pleasing and a "signature" facility.
16. There needs to be better signing for letting people know that Flower Street is still open for bike/ped traffic. Presently it just says that it is closed to thru traffic.
17. The switchbacks are the objectionable part of the UO.

Moderator Facilitated Responses:

- Baker Engineering Corp provided an explanation of grade and landing requirements for a public pedestrian bridge.
- The Department previously considered a single lane guideway at Flower St. as an un-preferred option. (A 2-1-2 lane configuration). The Department will not build a 2-1-2 option as part of the guideway. At no place does guideway contain a 2-1-2 lane configuration (where bi-directional buses alternate sharing 1 lane)
- The Department and Commissioner Redeker stressed that the DOT was at the meeting to get public feedback on the design process for the up the up-and-over and that the bridge would be built.
- The Department reviewed numerous options for Flower Street from lowering the tracks to lowering the road. They were not feasible.
- Some buses will get off at Sigourney St. Terminating the system at Sigourney St, until the I-84 viaduct is replaced is not a preferred or feasible alternative. 75% of the current bus riders will be headed to the core of Hartford, so getting as close to the city core as possible while avoiding traffic is an important feature of the system.
- General Responses
 - o The Department will consider all possible suggestions offered from the July 16, 2013 meeting, including, but not limited to: aesthetically pleasing design, elevators, fewest number of switch backs possible, and a review of signage.

Closing:

Mr. Harley reiterated that the Department would consider all of the stakeholder comments from the meeting. The Department will follow up (possibly by e-mail) with the Neighborhood associations, as well as with another presentation when new concepts are completed, hopefully in 3 months or so. (Mid – late October)

Mr. Redeker thanked everyone for attending. He stressed that the Department was there to listen to the comments, and get feedback from the various interested parties and groups. Mr. Redeker identified Randal Davis, as a contact source for any questions that people might have about the Flower St up and over.

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